Sindh to build 2.1m houses, provide free healthcare to millions: provincial minister

By Bakhtawar Mian

ISLAMABAD: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has said that the provincial government would build 2.1 million houses and provide them free of cost to millions of families from low-income backgrounds.

Talking to media persons at the National Press Club here on Saturday, he claimed that Sindh had set Pakistan's best example of a public-private partnership.

Mr Memon said the Sindh government had provided free treatment to 2.9 million people. Recalling a presentation by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari at the Presidency, he said people from all over the country were coming to Sindh for treatment. "If you go to hospitals in Sindh, you will not be asked for a domicile for treatment," he clarified.

The minister said that one billion dollars had already been spent on Thar coal. He said the country's largest coal reserves were located in Tharparkar and that electricity being generated from Tharparkar was being fed into the national grid. The work carried out by the Sindh government, he added, was not done for just one individual.

"This work was done so that the entire country could benefit from it," he said, adding that everyone needed to collectively present a positive image of Pakistan to the world. He said that just as Sindh had shown performance, other provinces should do the same. "We have only kept speaking against each other while sitting in the media. We need to present Pakistan's positive face to the world," he said.

Mr Memon said the importance of public-private partnership was discussed in Bilawal Bhutto's briefing and that this message should be conveyed to diplomats so they could invest in Pakistan. He said that while the situation was not ideal, the country needed to move forward together in a positive manner.

He added that the Presidency belonged to everyone and that was why Bilawal had chosen it for the briefing.

He said events of different institutions were regularly held at the Presidency and that the criticism made by Rana Sanaullah was not appropriate.

He said most people appreciated Bilawal Bhutto's briefing, with only a few criticising it. "We want the kind of briefing given by the PPP chairman to also be held abroad," he said.

The senior minister said Pakistan had been blessed by Allah with natural mineral resources. He said the Pakistan Peoples Party had always made extraordinary efforts for journalists and invited them to visit press clubs across Sindh to see this. He added that the PPP had maintained good relations with journalists and their organisations.

He said the Journalist Protection Bill was first passed by the Sindh Assembly and that several requests had also been received from the Islamabad Press Club.

"We will try to provide facilities for the National Press Club from the Sindh government," he said, adding that the provincial government would arrange visits of journalists to its projects for journalists across Pakistan.

Mr Memon said politics in the country had been reduced to criticising each other and that there was a need for more positive developments. Referring to the chief minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he said he was welcomed to Sindh and that some matters agreed upon with him were not fulfilled.

He said that when the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister visited Sindh again, he was not stopped from any activity or work and was respected as a holder of a constitutional office.

Dancing terracotta figurine from 3rd century BC hints at presence of Jainism in Taxila

By Amjad Iqbal

TAXILA: A newly-discovered quartz artefact and a terracotta female figurine, dated back to the early 3rd century BC, captured mid-dance, her face radiant with jubilation, are offering archaeologists rare insights into the religious plurality and cultural life of ancient Taxila, following fresh excavations at the historic Bhir Mound, regarded as the earliest urban settlement of the Taxila civilisation.

The preliminary study of these newly discovered antiquities belongs to the late Maurya period and the earliest Greek era in Taxila.

Keeping in view in-depth archaeological research on such figurines testified that such artefacts are characteristically local and clearly indicate the direction from which the arts and crafts of Taxila drew their inspiration under the rule of the Mauryas," said Deputy Director of Punjab Archaeology Department Aasim Dogar.

While leading the five-member excavation team, Mr Dogar informed that the female figurine is made of terra cotta and it is five inches in length and three inches in width, adding that "Preliminary dating places the artefacts early 3rd century BC, though specialists caution that further laboratory testing and contextual analysis are required before definitive conclusions can be drawn".

The discoveries made by the team comprising Anam Aziz, Anmol Zahoor, Abubakar and Hanifullah during the systematic excavation of one of South Asia's earliest urban settlements are being described by experts as significant additions to the archaeological narrative of Taxila — a city long celebrated for its role as a centre of learning, trade and spirituality.

The member of the excavation team, Abubakar, stated that terracotta figurines, however, have drawn particular scholarly attention.

Depicting a female figure wearing earrings and bangles – in a dynamic dancing posture, adorned with jewellery and expressive facial features, the artefact conveys movement, emotion and celebration, qualities rarely preserved with such clarity in early terracotta art. "This is evidence of the fact that even in the early ages of human civilisation, females were not only aware of decorative ornaments but they also utilised them as in today's"

Hanif Ullah, an expert in excavation who spent years with the Italian excavation mission to Pakistan, expressed that it is in moulded form, and we expect that more figurines may also be discovered from the ruins of this ancient city that once flourished along the Silk Road.

"The female figurine's jubilant expression challenges the often-ascetic imagery associated with early religious traditions, suggesting that music, movement and celebration also formed part of spiritual life in ancient Taxila," he added.

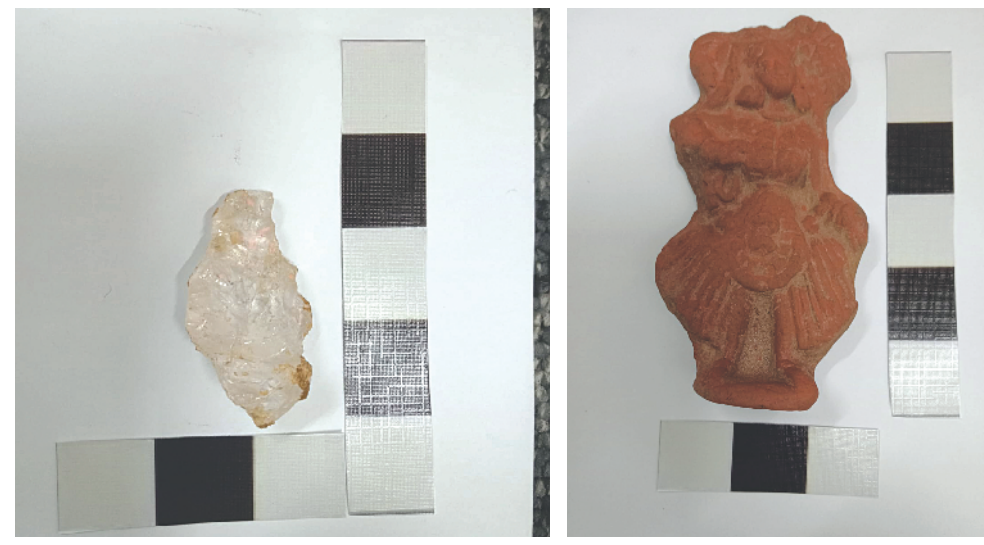
A senior official of the Federal Department of Archaeology and former curator of the Taxila museum Dr Abdul Ghafour Lone told *Dawn* that similar terracotta figurines unearthed in earlier excavations at the Taxila valley civilisation have been associated by scholars with the presence of Jain communities.

Comparable artefacts have been recorded at sites across the subcontinent where Jain followers are known to have flourished, strengthening the argument that Jainism had an early footprint in the Taxila region.

"Such figurines are not isolated finds," said the senior archaeologist familiar with Gandharan material culture. "The discovery at Bhir Mound, combined with parallels from established Jain centres, suggests that followers of Jain traditions coexisted here alongside Buddhists and adherents of other belief systems," he revealed.

He added that Taxila is widely known as a major Buddhist centre of learning, but discoveries testify to its role as a cosmopolitan city where multiple religious traditions intersected.

ARCHAEOLOGISTS are quarrying the Bhir Mound ruins in search of lost history trails. — Dawn



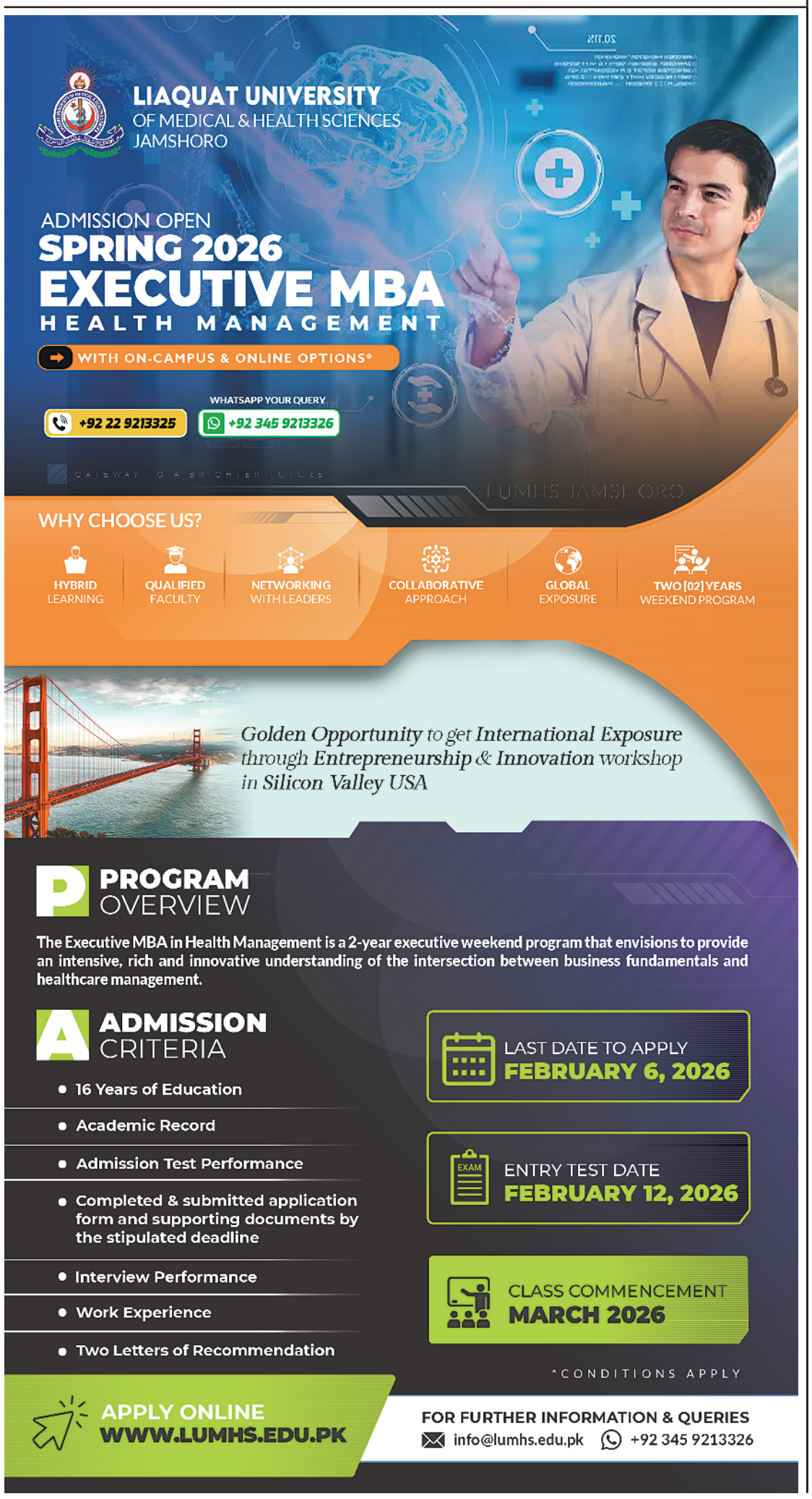
NEWLY discovered quartz stone and female figurine, dated back to the early 3rd century BC, are offering archaeologists rare insights into the religious plurality and life of ancient Taxila, during excavations at the historic Bhir Mound, regarded as the earliest urban settlement of the Gandhara Civilisation. — Dawn

The latest finds add weight to the view that Jainism, often overshadowed in Gandharan studies, may have had a more visible presence in the region than previously assumed. Dr Lone argues that sustained excavation and conservation efforts could yield further evidence illuminating the social, religious and artistic life of one of South Asia's earliest cities.

Anmol Zahoor, member of the excavation team, told *Dawn* that Bhir Mound represents the earliest occupational layer of Taxila, with habitation stretching back to the Achaemenid period and continuing into early Indo-Greek times.

Anam Aziz, involved in the current dig, said that the quartz stone artefact, deliberately shaped and carefully placed within a defined stratigraphic layer, likely served a symbolic or ritual function.

Deputy Director of the Punjab Department of Archaeology Aasim Dogar said *Dawn* that newly recovered artefacts have been transferred to secure storage for conservation and detailed study and are expected to be placed on public display at the Taxila Museum after scientific documentation is completed.



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KWSSIP

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (REOI) FOR SELECTION OF INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT

1. The Karachi Water & Sewerage Corporation (KW&SC) have received a loan through EAD, Government of Pakistan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) / Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the counterpart share of funds from GOS for the Project Implementation Unit (PIU), Karachi Water & Sewerage Services Improvement Project (KWSSIP-II).

2. The PIU, KWSSIP intends to apply part of the proceeds to make eligible payments against the services of following candidates as individual consultants at PIU, KWSSIP.

S.No	Title of Position	Qualification and Experience
01	**Director Change Management (01 Position)**	• Master's degree in Business Administration, Organizational Development, Human Resources, or related discipline (18 years of education). Certification in Change Management (e.g., PROSCI, ACMP, or equivalent) will be an advantage. • At least 15-20 years of relevant experience in organizational change management, digital transformation, or utility reform projects. • Proven experience in developing and implementing change management frameworks in large organizations. • Strong understanding of project management methodologies (PMI/PRINCE2) and technology-driven transformation. • Demonstrated expertise in stakeholder engagement, communication strategies, and cultural transformation. • Knowledge of Pakistan's public-sector institutional environment and experience with donor-funded projects will be preferred.
02	**Manager Technical & Engineering (01 Position)**	• Bachelor's degree with a major in Civil/ Mechanical /Environmental Engineering or equivalent plus a Master's degree in Civil/Water and Wastewater Engineering/ Sanitary Engineering/Hydraulic/Environmental Engineering or equivalent from The Higher Education Commission (HEC)-recognized university is required. • The candidate should have a minimum of 20 years' experience and at least 5 years' experience as a manager or on a senior position on major civil and mechanical works projects based on The International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC) form of contract and funded or supported by Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs). • The candidate should have strong technical and engineering skills and experience including planning, design, preparation of specifications and bidding packages, construction supervision and contract management. • The candidate should have a good appreciation and knowledge of World Bank safeguards policies and practices, procurement guidelines and regulations, monitoring and evaluation(M&E) and GIS. Prior exposure to the technical management practices of the World Bank or other multilateral development partners will be considered a strong advantage. • Experience in Pakistan or Central/South Asia, with membership/registration in a recognized professional engineering body.

3. The detailed ToRs for the Individual Consultant Services of above-mentioned positions can be obtained from the website: **www.kwssip.gos.pk**.

4. Interested consultants may submit their Expressions of Interest (EoI) in the form of Covering Letter along with detailed CV and supporting documents (copies of CNIC, passport, degrees, and all relevant certificates) via email to the Project Director PIU (KWSSIP) at applications.ic@kwssip.gos.pk within Fifteen (15) days of the publication of this advertisement. Qualified female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

5. The consultants shall be selected in accordance with (Section-VII Open Competitive Selection of Individual Consultants of World Bank's Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers (Revised Fifth Edition September 2023).

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